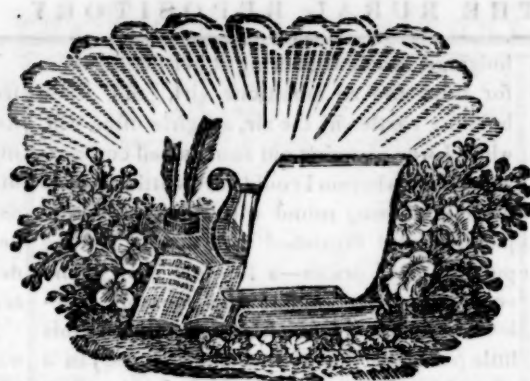


THE RURAL



REPOSITORY.

DEVOTED TO POLITE LITERATURE, SUCH AS MORAL AND SENTIMENTAL TALES, ORIGINAL COMMUNICATIONS, BIOGRAPHY, TRAVELING SKETCHES, AMUSING MISCELLANY, HUMOROUS AND HISTORICAL ANECDOTES, SUMMARY, POETRY, &c.

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SELECT TALES.

From the Lady's Book.

A Stray Leaf from a Journal.

BY MISS C. GOOCH.

It was on a beautiful summer's day in 18—, that I returned after some years absence, to pay a visit to my native village in New England.

I again trod the streets which had once been so familiar to me. Joy was my prevailing feeling, till I turned the corner of a street, and approached the house which was my aunt's. I knew of that dear relative's death, but I could not feel that I should never hear that kind voice again; that she was gone—for ever—till I passed the door where, in other times, I had flown after a short absence, to receive a kind embrace;—but now, none was there to care for me; none to welcome me:—another filled the place that had been hers.

As I came to the well remembered school-house, it was noon, and the emancipated children were thronging forth, with many a glad smile and merry laugh. When I last stood before the door of that school-house, I, too, was a child; and I forgot for a moment that so few years could make me a woman—I paused to gaze anxiously in the faces of that little flock, half expecting to see my own schoolmates;—but I was brought to recollection by a girl addressing me respectfully.

'Do you wish to see Miss Birch, ma'am?'

'No, my dear,' I replied and walked on. So! there was a new schoolmistress too! The changes in my native place struck me more forcibly—made me feel more sensibly the lapse of time, than all the great revolutions I had known or heard of during the same period on the vast theatre of the world.

Oh! the pleasant days of old! I caught myself sighing this exclamation, and, 'says I to myself, *Was* the past so much happier than the present?—Memory answered—No.

In calculating the lights and shadows of our life, we do too much forget the thousand every day pleasures; they seem to be over-

shadowed by our calamities. When we think of our condition, it is mostly on our *troubles* and the way to get rid of them, that we dwell; but when the present becomes the past, it appears much more happy than the present. When a few years have fled, and newer sorrows and troubles occupy our minds, then, when we look back on the past, our former woes appear diminished in the distance, while we recall the delightful hours passed in the society of friends, now perhaps lost for ever, the many little pleasures of those gone-by years, and we exclaim with a sigh—'Oh! the happy days of old!'

I rang the bell at the mansion which had been the residence of Julia Hartland. She had been the favorite companion of my childhood, though of a very different disposition, and, as indeed most of my friends have been, older than myself. A servant came to the door, and I asked if Miss Hartland was in.

'She don't live here, ma'am.'

'Do you know where she does live?'

'No, ma'am; we have lived here two years.'

'Does Miss M'Queenan still keep shop in — street?' I received an answer in the affirmative, and thanking the girl, pursued my way to — street.

Good Miss M'Queenan! she was a real original. I had thought that perhaps she had grown rich and retired from business, by that time; but I did not reflect: how *could* Miss M'Queenan grow rich? She, who always gave twice as much gingerbread or candy for a cent as any body else; she, who would always pop in a few raisins overweight; she who, I verily believe, did love with a motherly yearning all the noisy urchins who thronged her shop between schools; and she, whose bosom thus overflowed with the milk of human kindness, was one of that much calumniated and unsympathized with class—cycloped old maids.

Oh! it is almost enough to drive any woman, who does not chance to be blest with a strong and firm mind, into accepting the hand of the first fool or puppy that offers, to escape the dreaded name of *old maid*. Gentlemen scoff and scorn, if a female on the

verge of old maidism, show in any way a desire to be married, and, doubtless, attribute it to some of their own manifold perfections; meanwhile the unfortunate object of their censure is thinking solely on how she can avert the cheerless prospect before her, and ward off the jeers and unmerited opprobrium with which she has seen others visited. She shrinks with affright, on reflecting that in a short time, she will be no longer welcomed among the young and gay; that she will soon not be able to take any pleasure in the conversation of the intelligent and agreeable of the other sex, without having to endure the sneer of 'Just see how the old maid is setting her cap; poor thing! why will she continue to mix in young company?' And the same vivacity of disposition, which would be pronounced delightful and charming in a married woman of her years, is, in her, stigmatized as a desire to appear young; while, on the contrary, if she be thoughtful and grave, she is pronounced soured and sullen. And if she endeavors to associate with the married part of the community, she is with them, but not of them! they cannot sympathize with her, and are apt to fancy that she cannot with them. And she may rest assured that, if there is any scandal or quarrels among any of her acquaintance, it will, in any way possible, all be laid to her. Happy, then, is the woman who has some pursuit—some mental resources, which render her independent of general society.

This state of things would not be, if these 'uncloistered nuns' were treated with proper respect and attention. If there was a little forbearance exercised—a little more indulgence for the foibles and peculiarities produced by their isolated situation, there would be fewer unfortunate marriages and helpless orphans.

Few women reach the age of twenty-five without having received one or more offers of marriage; and, if they do not become attached to any of their suitors, and prefer remaining single, till addressed by some one that they can conscientiously vow to love and obey; there are ten chances to one that they

will always remain so; for intelligent men, of good principles and prepossessing manners, possessing a competence, are not so very plenty; and, most assuredly, a woman of sense and feeling would not wish to marry any other. What happiness could she expect who married one that could not speak without her blushing for him, however handsome or rich he might be?—Neither is absolute poverty agreeable, however much love you may have withal; for, how can a sensitive wife, if married to a man she loves and esteems, bear to see the noble mind, which perhaps, first won her affections, bowed down and broken, in the ceaseless toil and anxiety of procuring a scanty subsistence? There are a thousand other reasons, why the more noble minded and affectionate in her disposition a female is, the more chances there are for her remaining in a state of single blessedness or wretchedness—which term is right?

I scarcely know why my feelings are always so much roused to vindicate the sisterhood. It may be from a kind of prophetic feeling that I have had from childhood—that I should myself belong to it. It is almost too early to think about that while in my teens, but it may be so—it may be not. At any rate, I feel no horror of belonging to a class which claims Miss Mitford—dear, cheerful Miss Mitford! who has read her works, but longs to take a journey to England, for the express purpose of taken a quiet dish of tea with her, and talking delightful gossip about *‘Our Village?’*

I entered Miss M’Queenan’s shop. There, at least, no revolution had taken place; there she sat behind the counter, with her knitting in her hands; it seemed to me the identical blue worsted stocking, on which she was at work when I saw her last. ‘How do you do, Miss M’Queenan,’ said I stretching my hand over the counter.

‘How do you do, Miss,’ she replied, looking at me inquisitively, then continuing, ‘but I really can’t say your name, Miss.’

‘Don’t you know me?—my name is Maurice—Kate Maurice. Julia Hartland and I used to come very often to see you.’

‘Oh! la, yes, my dear, I remember you now; why, how you have grown; won’t you walk into the back shop and rest yourself, my dear?’

‘No I thank you, not now; I am in search of Julia Hartland: can you tell me where she lives?’

‘Why didn’t you know she was married? She lives on her husband’s farm, about six miles from here.’

‘Julia married to a farmer!’ cried I, in some surprise. ‘What is his name?’

‘Yes, my dear, and she looks as pretty as ever:—his name is Burly.’

I staid conversing with Miss M’Queenan a few minutes longer, and then returned to my

lodgings, much wondering at her intelligence, for Julia was an ambitious girl, and when building castles in the air, as girls often will, while I was planning out some small comfortable house, wherein I could have a little room to myself, all hung round with book-cases and pictures, and furnished with stands holding port-folios of prints—a few low chairs, and some pots of geraniums and monthly rose-bushes—while I fancied myself sitting in this little paradise, (for so it seemed to me,) in a winter’s evening, with the blinds closed, a bright wood fire, and a shade lamp on the little book-covered table by my side, and my greatest desire for public pleasures, limited to having tickets for the theatre whenever I wished, her visions were of magnificent mansions—splendid carriages—jewels—balls—parties, and so forth. And Julia was married to a plain farmer. ‘Twas strange, ‘twas passing strange.’

On my return, I informed my father of my friend’s marriage, and begged him to drive me out to see her in the afternoon; he assented, and, after dining, I prepared to go; but, my father being unexpectedly detained by business, provided me with a driver and guide, in the innkeeper’s son.

We drove out of town. I had formerly known all the farms on the road; but, somehow it did not occur to my mind that my friend’s husband must live on one of the old farms. It seemed to me that I should see some entirely new place, forgetting that farms do not spring up like mushrooms, to accommodate the rising generation; and I felt surprised, when the boy turned off the road towards a well known gate, the entrance to a farm, of which, in childhood, every field and meadow were as familiar to me as to the owner. Oh! the blackberrying and strawberrying expeditions I had had there.

‘Where are you going, my lad?’ I asked; ‘this is Mr. Hutchins’s farm.’

‘No, ma’am, it belongs to Mr. Burly; he bought it when Mr. Hutchins went to the west.’

‘Every body is going to the west,’ thought I, as bidding the boy wait till I sent to him, I alighted, and walked up to the house alone. It seemed like an old friend to me. It was an ancient building, somewhat like the old Dutch houses; the upper story overhung the other, and the roof slanted down behind, till the eaves were within three feet of the ground. I have been told it was built in this peculiar manner as a defence against the Indians, though I do not pretend to understand how it was calculated for that purpose. It was newly painted, and the evidence of female taste ran over the white walls, in the shape of convolvuluses, or, as I love to call them, morning glories, intermingled with the tender green clusters of the hopvine.

There was the old well at a little distance from the house, but the sweep was gone, and its place supplied by a windlass, and the magnificent elm, the last of the forest, still hung over it; but the clumsy heap of stones that used to be called the horse-block, had disappeared. The barn, too, was replaced by a new one, with much more pretensions to architectural elegance than the house itself.

I knocked, but no one heard me; the door was ajar, and so was another that opened out of the passage, and, as I advanced, a sweet voice struck my ear. I stood unnoticed at the door. It was Julia; she was sitting in a low chair, in a small, and neatly furnished parlor, playing with a child, and chaunting to it that wise nursery song, with which, I suppose all the English world have been lulled to sleep in their infancy.

Rock-a-by, baby, upon the tree top,
When the wind blows, the cradle will rock;
When the bough breaks, the cradle will fall—
Down come rock-a-by, baby and all.

A slight motion of mine startled the young mother; she turned and saw me. Time had altered my appearance more than hers; and, not expecting to see, she did not recognize me, and looked inquiringly as she advanced with a bow and smile of modest dignity.

‘What! Julia, have you forgotten your old friend Kate?’

‘Is it Kate?’ she exclaimed—but before she could say more, my arms were round her, and I was kissing her and the baby alternately. ‘It is yours, Julia, is it not?’ I said, as I pulled the little crowing thing from her arms.

‘Yes, it is mine,’ said Julia, returning my caresses; ‘but my dear Kate, what cloud did you drop from? how came you here?’

‘Business called my father to the north, and I prevailed upon him to bring me, and I came here in a gig, which, by the way, is waiting for me at the first gate.’

‘Waiting for you?—surely you don’t intend to go away directly?—who came with you?’

‘The innkeeper’s son.’

‘Oh! then I shall send him away. I have no idea of letting you go till you return home. Come, walk down to the gate, and send any necessary message to your father. No objections—don’t talk to me about clothes, I will have your trunks brought here.’

Nothing loth to be detained, I wrote a few words to my father on the leaf of my pocket book, and then resigned myself to the pleasure of a renewed intercourse with my friend.

It is unnecessary to detail the causes that had so suspended our correspondence, that we were left in total ignorance of each other’s whereabouts; you must imagine our explanations given, and my introduction to Mr. Burly, a gentlemanly, and evidently well educated man. You must imagine our tea taken,

and the evening pleasantly spent, and the next morning, Mr. Burly having departed to his usual avocations; you must fancy Julia and myself seated in the little parlor, with the cradle between us, and a work-covered table by our side.

'You express surprise,' said Julia, 'at my settling down the contented wife of a farmer, and I recall with shame my girlish folly, but you were the confidant of my girlhood, and knew all my silly thoughts; It is but just that you should also know how I got cured of them.'

'A short time after you left the town, there came to honor us with his presence, a young gentleman of stylish appearance and insinuating manners, who was, according to his own account, a southern planter of great wealth. It is to be asked what such a person had to do in our little sea-side village, the answer was ready—he was tired of the springs, and wished to try the effect of the sea breezes. He lodged at the only inn, and never was mine host's daughter in so much request; she received pressing invitations from all quarters, for from her alone was it that we could obtain any intelligence about the handsome stranger. She was ready to impart all the information that she could collect, and thought him the most interesting person she had ever seen; he was so polite, so handsome, so—in short, he was like the heroes of half a dozen novels, and, according to the general practice both of belles and beaux, because we saw that he was very handsome, we, in fancy, endowed him with every virtue under the sun.'

'Of course he appeared at church on Sunday, and I must with shame acknowledge, that most of our belles looked oftener towards the innkeeper's pew, than to the pulpit, and, I am afraid, thought more of its new occupant than the sermon.'

'When we came out of church, an event, almost unprecedented occurred. Our minister's daughter—Miss Martin—the belle *par excellence*, as you will remember, of our village, not particularly from her beauty, though quite pretty; but because she spent a portion of every year on a visit to relations in the great city of —, who, then, so proper to become our belle, and dictate to us, concerning fashions and manners?—It is impossible to be placed on any pinnacle of greatness, without being a little elevated thereby; and I must acknowledge that Miss Martin was no exception. She, in general, deemed it due to her importance to preserve a dignified distance of manners, but on this occasion she was all smiles and graciousness, as she approached Mary Bonny, who stood at a little distance from the door, evidently expecting the attendance of her father's handsome guest. She took her, arm and after

particular inquiries after her health, invited her to tea. And many other girls crowded around her, to participate, if possible, in the anticipated introduction. Now I was too modest—too proud, if ye will—to seek for an introduction in this way, however much I might have been pleased with one. You are aware that on my dear mother's death, I went to reside with my uncle. I took his arm, and, as was my wont, pursued my way towards home. We had advanced but a few steps, when we were overtaken by Mr. Bonny, accompanied by his guest, whom he introduced to us by the name of Mr. Benson. Mr. Benson entered into conversation with us, and attended us home. He declined entering, but accepted, with much apparent pleasure, an invitation to come in whenever at leisure.

'Knowing my foolish pride and ambition, you will not be surprized, when I tell you that my vanity was much flattered, by Mr. Benson, from that day, selecting me from the other girls of the village, to be the object of what is called "particular attention."

'His manners and conversation were very agreeable, though somewhat too much tinged with a boasting vein. The largest and handsomest house in the village put him in mind of his own; and Lawyer Bracket's bay horses were very much like his, only his were neater about the fetlock—"Fine animals by Jove!"—His carriage was brought from England. The mirrors in his drawing-room imported from France. This, with a great deal of talk about his estates, his slaves, and so forth, sufficed to convince us what a great man had vouchsafed to visit us.

'Mr. Benson's attentions soon assumed the form of addresses, which made me the envy of all the girls of the village. It never once occurred to me that the little property my father had left me, could be any object to so rich and important a gentleman, though I did sometimes reflect with shame on how little it was.

'I now do wonder at myself—now that the scales have fallen from my eyes; but I fancied myself in love with this man, and gave him encouragement, much to the sorrow of William Burly, who as I have before told you bought this farm from Mr. Hutchins, and would have made me its mistress.

'Now, I loved cousin William, but I had loved him from childhood, and I did not think that it was the sort of love that I ought to feel for a husband. It was no new thing for cousin Willy to love me, and because I did not feel much agitated in his avowal of it, I concluded that I was not in love with him. "In love!" what a ridiculous word, as if love was some kind of a pit, which unwary travellers fell into.

'Time passed on; I often saw Mr. Benson in company at my uncle's house, where

he was a great favorite. He was a skillful flatterer, and, any one that contrives to put us in a perfect good humor with ourselves, is generally very well liked. All the village pronounced him a good match for me, and all things seemed prosperously *en train*, to every body but me.

'Tell it not in Gath—whisper it not in Askalon," I began to get tired of my beau; I began to think him vulgar, not in his manners or appearance; no, in externals and general conversation he was unexceptionable, but it was that vulgarity of mind and feeling which you may find as often in a duke as a peasant. I could not utter any recollected passage of noble thought or feeling, with the certainty of meeting his responsive smile and glance. If I heard of any good or unselfish action, or, if I needed advice, it was not to him that my thoughts recurred, but to the neglected cousin William, who now avoided coming to our house.

'There was another drawback—he had no pleasure in reading—no taste for poetry. He would read to me if I wished it, or listen attentively and complacently while I read, but he evidently had little relish for it. A book was to him but a book—not an ideal world, I do not dare to say that a man is less worthy, though he may be less loveable, because he is not fond of rhyme or blank verse; but I will say, that there must be something radically wrong about the heart of a person who is fitted by education to understand, yet does not feel and admire the noble and good sentiments of which both prose and verse are so often made the vehicles.

'Such a one was Benson; he seemed to consider it a necessary thing to have read the most popular and celebrated works, and to join in praising them; but, he did not reflect on their contents—they were not to him as friends—there was no wholesome enthusiasm about him.

'You say that you do not understand how I could ever think that I loved such a man, but you must remember that he was handsome and insinuating; you must also remember that his attentions were, at first, a triumph to me, an exciting novelty. But, when we became more intimate, this wore off; I was disappointed in him, and dissatisfied with myself; I began to be morbidly, nervously discontented; the bright dream of my youth had lost its brilliance—how empty was it all, if this was love!

'I was standing in our porch, towards evening, in one of those moods of weary, sickening sadness, that now usually assailed me, after an interview with Mr. Benson; and, looking on the distant landscape, with that earnest gaze which tells that the mind is far away, when one, who had been too long a stranger, came up the steps and stood by my

side—it was my cousin William. I bade him welcome, and then ensued an embarrassed silence, which I did not wish to break, for I dreaded the censure that my conscience told me I deserved.

‘At last he suddenly took my hand, and spoke to me in that love-subdued tone of voice, which indicates a triumph over great internal agitation.

“‘Julia,’ said he, ‘I wish you to forget that I ever addressed you in any other character than that of a friend; and, I pray you to believe that in what I now say to you, I am not influenced by my own disappointment, but by purely friendly feelings for my own cousin and old playmate.

“‘I would speak to you of Benson. I have seen with anxiety your encouragement of his addresses—do not interrupt me, Julia, now that I have brought myself to speak of it; I will warn you, and then I shall never trouble you more. I intend selling my farm, and removing to the west. But what I wished to say about Benson is this; I believe him to be an impostor—make inquiries, Julia—get your uncle to write to the place this fellow says he comes from, and if he be what he would have you believe he is—then I can only say, may you be as happy with him as I should have striven to make you. But be certain who and what he is, before you take a step farther—before your affections become irrevocably his. I feel that he is an impostor, but I cannot explain to another the minute particulars on which my conviction is founded. I do not ask you to place reliance on my judgment, or to do this because I wish it, but for your own sake, think if my advice is not reasonable; judge it candidly and act accordingly. This is most probably the last time I shall ever see you. I shall leave this place as soon as I conclude the sale of my farm: I have now no tie to bind me here. I once hoped—but it is useless talking of that now. Farewell! and may God bless you.” As he uttered these last words he sprung down the steps and walked rapidly towards the spot where his horse was fastened.

‘When he began speaking, I felt vexed that he should think I needed his advice, but when he left me, and I knew that it was for my own good that he spoke, for he had never deceived me, that he was going away for ever—that I should indeed lose my kind, intelligent companion—my own dear cousin Willie I then felt of how very little real importance to me were the pretensions of Benson—that were he all he assumed to be, he would never make me happy; and obeying the impulse of my heart, I ran after him calling stop, come back, William, I want to speak to you; dear cousin, come back;—But it was too late—he did not hear me—mounted his horse and rode off, without casting one look behind.

‘I looked after him as long as I could distinguish his form, and then went to my chamber, locked myself in, and cried bitterly. When, after some time, I began to be able to think of my situation, my first resolve was to write, and tell William that Benson was nothing to me—that I cared not if the charge against him were true or false.

‘But was this true? If he had come to me in good faith and honest affection, was not some consideration due to his feelings? Though no promise had been given, or asked between us, yet I knew that I had given him such encouragement as would justify him in thinking me a heartless coquette, if I now broke off with him, without any other reason than the change of my sentiments. It was true that I was disappointed in him; but was he to be blamed because his mind and feelings did not exactly come up to my standard of perfection?

‘Dizzy and bewildered, I exclaimed aloud, “What can I do—what can I do?” To become his wife with such sentiments towards him was impossible; yet, I could not bear to afflict him; and, to earn the name of a coquette was dreadful. The case would be very different, if, as William expressed his conviction, he was an impostor. I had no particle of proof that this was the case; yet, from the minute the idea was presented to my mind, I remembered a thousand words and actions of his, scarcely noticed at the time, which now seemed strongly corroborative of the opinion.

‘I passed that night most restlessly, and, the next morning, looked so ill, that my aunt would fain have had me go to bed again; but there was to be that afternoon a party, to which I had an invitation, and sick as I felt, I determined to go to it. My cousin was intimate with the family, and would most likely be there—I could give no reason for it—but it seemed to me that if I could but see him again, something would help me—something would assist me—and, in this blind reliance of something helping me, I determined to go to it—I longed to see him—to hear his voice once more—and I scarcely felt that it was me that all this perplexity related to, but somebody that I was hearing or reading about, and that the illusion would by and by disperse.

‘In this state of half stupor I remained till it was time to dress, and I was going up stairs for that purpose, when happening to glance through the window, I saw Mr. Benson coming up to the gate; I knew that he would wish to attend me to the party, but I determined not to go with him; so, fearing that my aunt would see him, and be overwhelmed with inquiries “why I chose to go alone,” I hastened into the garden in front of the house to meet him; but suddenly the thought flashed through my mind—“Perhaps

he will misinterpret this eagerness to meet him; he will think it is because I love him.” I turned aside into the garden, and began gathering flowers as if that had been my motive for coming out.

‘It was as I had anticipated; he came to wait upon me; but, I told him I was not ready, and begged him so earnestly to go without me, that, with some pique, he said that he would do so; but he lingered talking with me for a short time. I examined his words and manners more closely than ever, but that evening he appeared to peculiar advantage.

‘There was a pensive expression about his fine features that gave them a new charm—there was a sadness in his voice—a tone of reflection in his remarks that was unusual; and I perceived a cast of anxiety in his eyes, and an earnestness of manner towards me, that struck me very painfully. My heart whispered that even if he were an impostor, he might love me. In fact he never seemed so worthy to be loved as at the moment I was contemplating how I might best escape from our tacit engagement. He let fall some words about being obliged by business to leave the village, and of his inability to tear himself away; and when with a sigh, he left me, I returned to the house still more perplexed and unhappy.

‘Oh! my friend, may you never know such an hour of bitter self-reproach as I then experienced. I began to dress myself, though interrupted by a swelling of the heart, whenever I thought of William, and the tears would force their way; I was obliged to leave off several times, to bathe my eyes and compose myself; at last I was ready, and, at my aunt’s suggestion, I stepped out to gather a few white buds to put in my hair, when after I had plucked them, I saw a letter lying on the ground. I picked it up; it was addressed to Benson, and was partly open.

‘You will blame me, Kate; but, put yourself in my situation—think of what a means was thus placed in my hands of satisfying my doubts respecting the integrity of Benson, and with what consideration he deserved to be treated. But wrong or not, I read the letter; nor can I pretend to express any repentance for having done so. I can repeat it to you, almost verbatim; for I read it over so often, to endeavor to comprehend its meaning, that it became impressed on my memory. It ran thus:—

“‘Dear Benson—I have received yours, and have only to say that I think you are playing a very foolish game. A country heiress is seldom worth *bagging*—it is a waste of powder and shot. As for your liking to the girl, I’ll bet you a dozen of champagne that you forget her in a week. We want you very much; there is plenty of *fresh game*; but,

we are getting too well known. A stranger would be very useful. *You understand.* In hopes that you will come on instant, I enclose you ten dollars, which is all I can spare at present; it will pay your expenses to N. Y. As for your bills at the village, leave them to remember you by. Yours, in haste, J. WHINDALE."

"Bagged—powder and shot!" I exclaimed, as I glanced my eye over this precious epistle. "*You understand.*" If he did, it was more than I could. Still, mysterious as some of the phrases of it were. I gathered enough from it to be convinced that he was a mere adventurer—a sort of Gil Blas. I stood with it in my hand, not determined how to dispose of it, when I saw its owner coming with rapid strides. I threw it down in the place I had found it, and knowing that he could not have perceived me through the fence of rose-bushes, retreated into the house, and stood at the parlor window to observe his movements.

"He came into the garden, looked about eagerly, and, on finding the letter, cast a glance around to see if he was observed, and put it into his pocket; as he did so, he caught a glimpse of my form at the window and immediately entered the house, expressing his pleasure at seeing by my dress my intention of going to the party.

"I stood before the glass arranging the curls in my hair; I could not speak to him; I felt sorry and ashamed for him; there was one sentence in the letter that touched my heart, or perhaps my vanity—it implied that he did love me. This made me feel less anger for the deception he had practised; but we can more easily forgive great faults than little meannesses. He told me a lie—a mere boasting, pitiful lie—and every remnant of the delusion was gone for ever.

"I came back," said he, in an easy unembarrassed manner, that proved falsehood was no stranger to him; "I came back to find a letter of importance, which I had dropped. It was from my overseer. He wishes me to return immediately. There are improvements making on my estate, that render my presence necessary. You know, my dear Miss Julia, that a man of large property has so much to attend to—so much responsibility—

"As he was speaking, he came behind me, and caught the expression of utter scorn and disbelief in my countenance, reflected from the mirror; he shrunk away, and from that moment seemed to understand that I knew him; whether he suspected that I had read the letter, I do not know; it is most probable that he did, from his subsequent conduct. I told him that I should not go to the party; he bowed, and took his leave, without remonstrance. I had now determined on my

course; for him, he was not worth a thought. The more I reflected over the letter, in a more despicable light he appeared, for, the idea having once presented itself that the scrawl was from a gambler, the solution of its obscurity was easy to any one.

"Oh! how humiliating to think that such a letter could concern me—that I had suffered the prepossessing exterior and boastings of a mere swindler to weigh down the sterling qualities of William Burly!—I felt so degraded, that had my own happiness only been at stake, I should not have dared to write to my cousin; but I knew that he had loved me, and his manner the day before, proved that he still did love me tenderly—and his is not a disposition that is able soon to form new attachments—it was due to him that he should know all this. Accordingly I wrote to him acknowledging my follies, expressing my regret, and entreating him not to depart without coming to tell me he forgave me.

"This missive I despatched by a special messenger, and, as I had hoped but dared not anticipate, William was soon by my side. What passed on our meeting, you can imagine, from knowing that he did not sell his farm, and that I am his wife.

"Our conversation was interrupted by Jane Allen, who had been, till that minute, detained by her peevish grandmother. She came in to see if by any possibility I had not departed, as it was now dark and she feared to go alone. She was dressed very prettily, and expected much pleasure. I was so happy myself, that I wished to make all happy around me, so I put on my bonnet and complied with her request, and William's whispered advice.

"There seemed to be some surprise among the company, on seeing Mr. Burly instead of Benson. He, however, treated me with all his usual attention, though I easily perceived that he was aware there could be no further intimacy between us, and made no attempt to pass the barrier of cold politeness. The next morning the town was wonder-struck, for the pretended southern planter had made a moonlight flitting, and, sure enough, left all his bills to "remember him by." So ended Julia's narration.

I spent some delightful weeks at Burly farm, and revisited all my old haunts. During my pilgrimage to one of them, I became unexpectedly acquainted with our good Miss M'Queenan's early history—smile not; for the village storekeeper had a story, and to me an interesting one.

YOUTHFUL FEELING.—As I approve of a youth,' says Cowley, 'who has something of the old man in him, so I am not less pleased with an old man who has something of the youth. He who follows this rule may be old in body, but can never be old in mind.'

TRAVELING SKETCHES.

From the New-York Mirror.

London and its Associations.

BY THEODORE S. FAY.

IN TWO PARTS—PART THE SECOND.

MAX, the aspiring insect, loves to mount a height, to rise above the insignificance of a level, and cast his glances over miles and over millions in a single moment. The emotion of joy which we experience in reaching a lofty altitude and beholding an extended prospect, particularly of a metropolis like Rome or London, involving profound historical associations, is characteristic of his noble aspirations. At such a moment the better parts of his nature predominate and even a common mind is struck with the transient fire of imagination and virtue. Such a view is worth a thousand homilies, and, without the horror, produces something of the moral effect of a death-bed. The world and its designs, its pomp and its distinctions, so dazzling and so huge when toiling among them and for them, lie now exposed in their true proportions—dreams—phantoms—buried under the smoke and fog which shall outlive the myriads swarming beneath. The metropolis itself, in your elevated and expanded imagination, holds only the space of an individual, and from the height which seems to raise you above its prejudices and its passions, its tempting allurements, its hidden dangers, you moralize upon its character and the events of its past existence with the dignity of a historian and the calmness of a philosopher. Indeed, a greater spell seemed to invest me, strengthened peradventure by our recent personal familiarity with the classic remnants of old Rome. I could almost deem myself one of those immortal deities so conspicuous and grand in their fabulous religion, and that, as Mercury or Jove, I looked down from the pagan heaven upon the distant plains of earth, while not only nations, but ages rolled beneath my feet as I stood. My imagination was aided in this kind of necromancy (without which traveling is a prosaic business) by the similar views which we had just enjoyed of Venice, Paris, Florence, Genoa, Rome, etc. and which had left impressions as warm and distinct on my memory as if received only the previous instant. A thousands years seemed to glide solemnly by in an hour. A dim view of the ocean lies in the horizon. I looked down in fancy on the naked isle of Britain, peopled with a few tribes of savages, trading in little canoes to the opposite coast of Gaul; the banks of the river dotted with straw thatched cottages; the long-haired men clothed with skins of beasts, and wandering to and fro, with large herds of cattle; while sometimes the gloomy Druids assembled around the altar, and the cries of human victims ascended with the smoke of the

flames which consumed them. I fancied the bark of Cesar, in that antique hour, and his victories over the rude islanders. Years rolled on. Old Rome began to totter, and the tremendous changes silently going on, upon the remote campagna, were announced to the tribes of this spot by the withdrawal of their Roman governors. The Saxon army came swarming from the east; the fleet of the cruel Dane hovered round yonder coast; and Arthur and Alfred wandered by this river and over these plains. Then from the south came the Norman William, and a train of stern kings swept up after him, Richard and John and the Henries, and the Edwards, and then the town began to assume its present appearance, and to be shaken and agitated with all the bloody and fierce scenes and characters of history, and with all the vivid details of Shakspeare. The various objects visible to the spectator are so intimately interwoven with the turbid and gore-drenched annals of England, that the sight of them arouses, with a startling intensity, a thousand romantic and thrilling incidents and characters, which since your first reading-days, have charmed and agitated the seclusion of your closet. I easily recognised the principal features of the town. Ludgate hill Fleet-street, the venerable thoroughfare of London, hallowed by the ebbings and flowings of nearly twenty generations. From my skyish eminence I gazed down into this street, cut, like a deep, narrow canal through the close pile of buildings, and I thrilled as I thought of the many beings familiar to me from their works and histories, who have trodden, with the common millions, through that single strait. Scarce a poet, orator, statesman, soldier, or assassin, a courtier, wit, king, queen, or bishop, a pilgrim, artist, or martyr of Old England, but has been there—sometimes, in the crisis of grand events, and sometimes in the careless unconsciousness of his ordinary idle hours. It is, perhaps, the precise space most unquestionably visited by every one in London, being in front of the cathedral, which at some period or other attracts every step. The most splendid feature of this spectacle is the river, with its bridges. The former appeals at once to the eye with a magnificence so striking and graceful as to explain at a glance all the Englishman's raptures. It goes bending, meandering and gleaming on through the airy gauze, with a beauty that at once fascinates the eye and calls the imagination to new realms. Its course is literally steeped in associations; but, within the limits of the town, it creeps through almost opaque masses of soot and smoke, belched forth from the wilderness of pipes, flues and chimnies. It would be needless to enumerate the immortal spots upon its shores. What beheadings and burnings; what hangings and massacres; what rebel-

lions and revolutions have gone on within this visible circle! Almost immediately beneath lies an open space of an irregular shape, and crossed by busy crowds of men and cattle. That is *Smithfield market-place*. On that very spot, William Wallace, betrayed into the hands of Edward by the base Monteith, was hanged, drawn and quartered with brutal ferocity. There, too, Wat Tyler was killed in the time of Richard the second; and there Dr. Rogers was burned, besides an immense number of others in the time of the eighth Henry, Mary, &c. There, too, were celebrated various tournaments and archery—sports of which you read in the English history. Still nearer, you behold a pile of gray buildings, with lofty courts open at the top, and heavy black gratings before the windows. That is *Newgate*. Yonder antique structure of gray stone, with four towers in the center, and overlooking the river, is the *Tower*. Within those walls Anna Boleyn was tried and executed; her beautiful head was struck off at one blow by an executioner sent for from Calais on account of his remarkable dexterity, and the very day after, her cruel husband was married to Jane Seymour. It would almost be a waste of paper to enumerate even the most conspicuous of those who have been beheaded on that spot, and the 'Tower-hill' immediately adjoining. Catharine Howard, Strafford, Essex, Thomas Cromwell, Seymour, duke of Somerset—Dudley, duke of Northumberland; and Stuart, duke of Monmouth. The number of executions which disgrace the English annals, are startling, especially when we remember that, many if not most of the victims, were the noblest of martyrs. The English kings, as they stand in history, have never had justice done them. Even in our eyes they have been insensibly invested with the sacredness of antique opinion; and their crimes and weaknesses, their ignorance, vanity and folly; their lies, thefts, robberies, murders, and brutal vices, have been fused into a whole picture, which we have been too willing to excuse and admire. The severity of modern philosophy will strip them of their theatrical lustre and show them, as many of them were, monsters. More unequivocal felons and assassins than some, were never hanged at Tyburn. I do not allude to the atrocities of their political administrations, (these would demand a separate chapter,) but to their personal villanies, even to the third William, after whom their kingly extravagances are evidently modified and restrained by the increasing moral force of public opinion—a principle which I trust and believe will continue to increase in power, Charles the first, notwithstanding several—(I will not say *princely*, for that term is ridiculous if intended to convey a moral excellence, but) *manly*

and redeeming features of his character, was guilty of crimes equally derogatory to the reputation of a legislator, a gentleman and a Christian. He was not ashamed to utter willful falsehoods, nor to connive at such private swindling as would subject an officer of the United States' government to a criminal prosecution. His desertion of Strafford was mean, his adherence to Buckingham ridiculous; and yet he has earned the title of '*unfortunate*.' His scoundrel son, who should have escaped the axe only for the *horsewhip*, is the '*merry monarch*,' and Henry the eighth, a villain every way almost too gross for credit; a beast, lawless, and utterly inhuman, who shed blood without measure, and without cause, in the impatience of passion or the idleness of sport—this abandoned, bloated, bloody wretch, is the '*Bluff King Harry*.' *Bluff!* One would think the whole world a courtier; that posterity had not yet dared to speak above the tone of adulation, and that the terror and sycophancy of the tyrant's personal slaves were perpetuated in the bosom of history itself. For my part I could scarcely help triumphing while thus looking down on these hoary, gore-stained scenes, to think how justly their once terrible masters have gone back to the dust, and how utterly all their train of oppressions and powers are crumbling with them in their graves. For us, at least, these fierce ages are ended. *Bluff Harry!* and merry Charles! your reign is over—you and yours. There will be no more flames kindled in Smithfield. Tower-hill and the Tower dungeons have drunk their last, and the rack, the stake, the axe and the dagger, are thrown aside for ever. At least no American petitioner shall again kneel here in vain to the haughty monarch of a future time, and whatever may be the fate of old England, storm-tost, wave-worn, time-beaten as she is; whatever miseries yet with their viewless wings brood over these outstretched miles and millions, I trust that a spirit of peace and justice dwells, and may ever continue to dwell among the plains and mountains, the cities and hamlets of my own far western country. May no Cromwell—no Cataline plunge her into ruin. May civil discord and ambition never tread down her harvest fields and encrimson her bright flowing rivers with the blood of her children. May no *Tower* rise, no *Smithfield* burn, no tyranny or persecution sound the alarm of war and wo. May no Sicilian vespers, no St. Bartholomew's-eve no massacre of Catholic or protestant of Christian or Jew, darken her annals. May there be in her future path no such events as have left in Europe and in England the foot-mark of every age in blood, and have cast such a fearful interest over the objects on which I now gaze.

Scathed old city! over which has so long

flowed, will so long continue to flow, the stream of ages—pierced and torn with war and oppression—stanch foe to France—victim of a thousand vicissitudes and persecutions—whose hand has been stretched forth to the farthest corners of the earth—who gatherest into thy bosom rare tributes, from every sea and from every clime. Venerable parent of my own land, how shall I separate and explain my thoughts at the sight of thee? Shall I pity, or hate, or love thee? What huge miseries have rolled over thee, mighty Babel, even as thou liest, leviathan on the flood, and sending up to heaven thy solemn voice. How plague, and fire, and famine have afflicted thee! How inundation, hurricane, tempest, lightning and earthquake have attacked and scarred thee! Even as the far Egypt thou hast shrunk beneath mysterious visitations of flies and locusts. Sometimes excessive rains have threatened thee with another deluge, and sometimes droughts appalled thee with apprehensions of the last day. How often over thy shrinking thousands have burst the thunders of the Vatican! How heavily the clouds of superstition have lowered over thee! How gradually broke upon thee light from the torch of Luther! What alarms have thrilled thy great heart! How hast thou started at the trump of rumor blown before the Dane and the Norman, before Philip and Napoleon! As thou liest now a giant at my foot, I wonder to remember how puny and timid thou hast often been beneath the frown of a priest, a woman, or a child! What stripes and goadings thou hast borne! How thou hast writhed and bled! How long thou hast suffered patiently before thy colossal limbs moved, and thy huge neck was withdrawn from the yoke! Thou hast been thyself an oppressor too, a malison on thee, old gladiator! What! when thy own sides were reeking and quivering with the lash, must thou mercilessly lay the scourge upon the back of thy child? We have not forgotten thy household despotism, haughty sire! It is thy once-affectionate daughter who now addresses thee. Shame on thy unnatural hand that drove us over the sea! Shame on thy cruel enmity that pursued us even to the desert! Thou wouldst have continued thy vindictive flagellations! Thou wast mistaken. The days of Xerxes were past. The ocean would none of thy fetters. The child whom thou wouldst have crushed, instead of thy victim, became thy foe, and mated her with thee in every clime. Art not ashamed of thyself, old Pharaoh? But we forgive thee! Nay, even yet we admire and love thee! All that we have, springs from thee, venerable and sturdy struggler with bloody ages! Even the freedom, our pride and our blessing, is thy legacy. Thy blood, is in our veins, thy heart in our

bosom. These have won us our new world. In yielding to us, thou yieldest only to thyself. Farewell! I am glad I have seen thee. I would not willingly have died without looking on thy face, England!

MISCELLANY.

Influence of Women.

Not a page in French history, from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth, but has to speak of some female reputation—nor is there a path to fame which female footsteps have not trod! Never have the French armies been engaged in the neighborhood, without there being found many of those females—of those delicate and fragile females—whom one sees in the saloons of Paris, slain on the field of battle, to which they had been led, not so much for a violent passion for their lovers (French women do not love so violently,) as by a passion for that action and adventure which they are willing to seek, even in a camp. At the battle of Jemappa Dumourier had for his aids-de-camp, two of the most beautiful, the most delicate, and accomplished women in society, of the time. Equally chaste and warlike, these modern Camillas felt a veneration for the profession of arms—they delighted in the smoke of the cannon, and the sound of the trumpet. Often, a General told me, in the most desperate cries of the battle, he has heard their slender but animated voices, reproaching flight, and urging to the charge: 'Whither do you go, soldiers! Is not the enemy yonder? Advance! Follow!' And you might have seen the waving plumes and amazonian garb, amid the thickest of the fire.—*Bulwer's France.*

Test of Ill Breeding.

THE swaggerer is invariably an impostor; the man who calls the loudest for the waiter, who treats him worst, and who finds more fault than any body else in the room, when the company is mixed, will always turn out to be the man of all others the least entitled, either by rank or intelligence, to give himself airs. The people who are conscious of what is due to them, never display irritability or impetuosity—their names insure civility, civility insures respect; but the blockhead or the coxcomb, fully aware that something more than ordinary is necessary to produce effect, is sure, whether in clubs or coffee rooms, to be of the most restless and irritable amongst his equals, the most cringing and subservient to his superiors.

Happy Days.

A PAPER was found after the death of Abderam III, one of the Moorish Kings of Spain, who died at Cordova in 961, after a reign of 50 years, with these words written by himself. 'Fifty years have passed since I was Caliph.

I have enjoyed riches, honors and pleasures, heaven has showered upon me all the gifts that man could desire. In this long space of apparent felicity I have kept an account of how many happy days I have passed—their number is fourteen. Consider then, mortals, what is grandeur, what is the world, and what is life.'

Not long since, two sailors passing along by a tailor's shop, observing the tailor at work with his coat off, and having the back of his waistcoat patched with different colors of cloth, induced the sons of Neptune to crack a joke upon the poor fellow, when one of the tars observed to the other, 'Look ye, Jack, did you ever see so many sorts of cabbage grow upon one stump before.'

'PERSONAL NARRATIVE' OF A VOYAGE TO MADRAS.—A story is told of a gentleman who, having been on business to the East Indies, and returned, gave the whole sum and substance of his travels in these words: 'I put my head out of the port hole of the ship one day, and, my eyes! how she did whiz!'

LITTLENESS OF MIND.—Little minds triumph over the errors of men of genius, as an owl rejoiceth at an eclipse of the sun.

Hudson City Forum.

A meeting of the Hudson City Forum will be held at the Court House, on Wednesday evening, January 13th, at half past 6 o'clock. An address will be delivered by S. Symonds, Esq.—subject, 'Utilitarianism.'

N. T. ROSSETER, Sec'y.

Letters Containing Remittances.

Received at this Office, ending Wednesday last, deducting the amount of Postage paid.

L. G. P. Belleville, N. Y. \$1.00; A. C. D. Sutton, Vt. \$0.81; C. T. R. Clarkson, N. Y. \$2.00; H. F. B. Brimfield, Ms. \$2.00; S. B. T. Canonsburg, Pa. \$1.00; S. M. D. New Ashford, Ms. \$1.00; B. E. North Amherst, Ms. \$1.00; A. J. Payn's Ville, N. Y. \$1.00; R. L. Bath, N. Y. \$1.00.

MARRIED.

In this city, on the 3d inst. Mr. James Nash, to Miss Electa Brandow.

On the 22d ult. by the Rev. Mr. Waterbury, Mr. George C. Hubbell, to Miss Ann Eliza Pinkham, both of this city.

On the 24th ult. by the Rev. Wm. Thatcher, Mr. James H. Ostrander, to Miss Hannah Hollenbeck, both of this city.

At Trinity Church, Athens, on the 23d ult. by the Rev. Mr. Thibou, Mr. Albert Le Roy White, of Rutland, Jefferson County, to Miss Almira White, of the former place.

At Northeast, Dutchess Co. on the 24th ult. by the Rev. Mr. Winters, Mr. Alanson Wagoner, of this city, to Miss Lucy Owen, of the former place.

At Clermont, on the 24th ult. by the Rev. Mr. Wagonhager, Mr. Peter Hart, to Miss Margaret Van De Bogart both of the town of Livingston.

At Coxsackie, on the 31st ult. the Rev. Leonard B. Van Dyck, Pastor of the Presbyterian Church, in Osbornville, Greene County, to Miss Lucy Ann, eldest daughter of Anthony Van Bergen, Esq. of the former place.

In Whitingham, Vt. on the 3d of Dec. Mr. William Bascom, to Miss Lucy Burns, both of that place.

Their vows of truth these lovers spoke

Their solemn faith they plighted,

And now in Hymen's 'seasoned' yoke

They're happily united.

J. C.

DIED.

Suddenly, in this city, on the 31st ult. Mrs. Hannah consort of James Mellen, Esq. in the 41 year of her age.

On the 24th ult. Ichabod Coe, a Soldier of the Revolution, aged 69 years.

On the 25th ult. Susan Barnard, wife of Abisha Barnard, (deceased,) in the 82d year of her age.

In New-York, on the 13th ult. Helen Louisa, daughter of John and Dorcas Haws, aged four months.



ORIGINAL POETRY.

For the Rural Repository.

A Leaf from a Lady's Album.

DEAR Hannah, might I flowerets bring
From others' stores to deck thy page,
Mine were a richer offering—
More meet the attention to engage
Of those, thy Album, who peruse
In hope to find some brilliant gem
Culled from the gifts of Heman's muse,
Or Byron's fadeless diadem.

But thou'at preferred an humbler flower,
Cultured alone by Friendship's hand,
To those that bloom in Genius' bower
And all its glowing tints command.
Then let my heart's warm offering,
Among thy gems and flow'rets bright,
Be as the modest flower of Spring,
The lowly violet, hid from sight,
O'er-powered by their more radiant hues,
And shrinking from each eye but thine,
Who seek'at alone from Friendship true,
The flowers to in thy wreath entwine.

Then think of her whose hand hath thrown,
Among thy lovelier, brighter flowers,
This simple one, 'tis Friendship's own—
Oh! think of her in thy lone hours—
Thy hours of deep and saddened feeling,
More dear than those with gladness fraught,
When, Memory o'er thee sweetly stealing,
The scenes of other years are brought
To live again in her fair page—
When friends of youth shall flit before thee,
And loves of youth thy mind engage,
Oh! let a thought of her come o'er thee,
Though haply she may be no more,
Who doth this small memento bring,
To add to thy poetic store—
A pure, though humble offering.

From the New-York Mirror.

A Scene on the Hudson.

'Twas summer night—the broad expanse above
Gladdened all earth with one mild look of love;
E'en like the affectionate, soft smile of home
When hearts unite, was that resplendent dome;
Or like the eloquent and tender spell
Of soul, illumining the face, where dwell
Celestial thoughts, even now in unison
With the wide sphere so pure to look upon.
The moon, her spangled train swept o'er the wave,
That bent in beauty like a willing slave;
Sparkling and happy that her unveiled face
Beamed in refulgent, undiminished grace
Upon its humble breast. Her presence seemed
All of the beautiful that we have dreamed
Of fairy land. The stream, the rocky shore,
The bordering, peaked hill—that distant bore
Sweet echo's voice, and the mild air so bland,
That Psyche might have whispered a command
In such a breath—and young Endymion slept
Fearless of charm—though o'er him slumb'ring crept
The stilly rays of his proud queen, as bright
As the heart's willing worship of this night!

On the broad river's calmed bosom stemmed
The bustling keel, all radiantly gemmed,
Of many a well-trimmed boat; that gayly dipped,
As if in sport, the oar the sheen had tipped.
Now gently moving, indolently slow,
And now with hastened plash they gayly row.
Sweet music led in its capricious wake
Yon gliding boats. Then eager to o'erake
The mellow strain, they one and all pursue
The martial band that played amid the crew.
Onward they went—the barks, the company,
Gliding and darting o'er the waters free;
The jest, the laugh, the quaintly-imaged thought
Up-springing from this summer scene; so fraught
With inspiration, and the harmony
Of all things beauteous; stream, and hill, and tree.
And heaven's most peaceful, cloudless evening smile
And earth in dreamy pleasure lulled the while:
Even life itself in this dread world did seem
A soft and beautiful imbodied dream.
And it shall be embalmed in memory,
That lingers still when fairy visions flee. M.

The Fallen Leaves.

We stand among the fallen leaves,
Young children at our play,
And laugh to see the yellow things
Go rustling on their way;
Right merrily we hunt them down,
The autumn winds and we;
Nor pause to gaze where snow-drifts lie,
Or sunbeams gild the tree.
With dancing feet we leap along
Where wither'd boughs are strown.
Nor past nor future checks our song!
The present is our own.

We stand among the fallen leaves
In youth's enchanted spring,
When Hope (who wearies at the last)
First spreads her eagle wing.
We tread with steps of conscious strength
Beneath the leafless trees,
And the color kindles in our cheek
As blows the winter breeze;
While, gazing towards the cold grey sky,
Clouded with snow and rain,
We wish the old year all past by,
And the young spring come again.

We stand among the fallen leaves,
In manhood's haughty prime,
When first our pausing hearts begin
To love 'the olden time';
And, as we gaze we sigh to think
How many a year hath passed,
Since 'neath those cold and faded trees
Our footsteps wandered last;
And old companions, now perchance
Estranged, forgot, or dead,
Come round us, as those autumn leaves
Are crushed beneath our tread.

We stand among the fallen leaves
In our own autumn day,
And tott'ring on with feeble steps,
Pursue our cheerless way.
We look not back, too long ago
Hath all we loved been lost;
Nor forward, for we may not live
To see our new hope crossed;
But on we go, the sun's faint beam
A feeble warmth imparts,
Childhood without its joy returns,
The present fills our hearts!

Christmas Times.

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all thro' the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In the hope that St. Nicholas* soon would be there.
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar plums danced in their heads,
And mamma in her kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap;
When out on the lawn there rose such a clatter,
I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters, and threw up the sash.
The moon on the breast of the new fallen snow,
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below.
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny rein-deer,
With a little old driver so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name:
'Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer! now, Vixen!
On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Dunder and Blixen!
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!
As dry leaves before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle mount to the sky,
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,
With the sleigh full of toys—and St. Nicholas too.
And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof,
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof;
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.
He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;
A bundle of toys was slung on his back,
And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack;
His eyes—how they twinkled! his dimples how merry,
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry;
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow;
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath,
He had a broad face, and a little round belly,
That shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him in spite of myself.
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all his stockings; then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose.
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like a down of a thistle;
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,
'Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night.'

* Santa Claus.

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